

Knafeh

(Sweet Baked Phyllo w. Cheese)

Knafeh is a traditional dessert very popular in the Middle East.

Ingredients:

1 (16 oz) shredded Phyllo dough (Kataifi)
12 oz Butter, melted
1 lb Ricotta cheese
1 lb shredded Mozzarella
½ cup Pine nuts
½ cup Pistachios, minced
⅓ cup Sugar
Knafeh dye (if available)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400° F
Use a food processor to finely chop the frozen, shredded phyllo dough. The strands should be about the size of a grain of rice. Pour the dough into a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together the ricotta, mozzarella, and 1/3 cup sugar. Place the butter in a large liquid measuring cup or bowl with a spout. Heat the butter in a microwave until completely melted, and let it sit for several minutes until a thick white foam has formed on top. Clarify the butter by using a spoon to skim off the foam. Carefully pour the butter into the bowl of phyllo dough. Avoid pouring in the white milk solids at the bottom of the clarified butter. Use your hands to mix the butter and dough together. Make sure that the butter is absorbed by taking handfuls of the dough and rubbing it between your palms. Add some of the dye if using and spread throughout the dough. Evenly spread the buttered phyllo dough into a 9x13" pan and firmly press it into the bottom and edges. Spread the cheese mixture onto the dough, avoiding the edges of the pan. Bake in the preheated oven until the cheese is slightly golden and the edges of dough are brown and bubbly, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove the Knafeh from the oven. Place a large platter or baking sheet over the baking dish. Carefully invert the baking dish onto the platter so the phyllo is on top. Top the Knafeh with syrup, pine nuts and pistachios. Cut into pieces and serve while hot.

Syrup

Ingredients:

½ cup Sugar
½ cup Water
1 tsp lemon juice
⅛ tsp rose water (optional)

Directions:

Combine the water and sugar in a small sauce pan, bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and stir in the lemon juice. Simmer, stirring constantly, until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is thickened, 5 to 7 min. (Do not let the mixture turn golden and caramelize.) Remove from heat and add the rose water; set aside.